**“The Church the House of God” Bible Echo and Signs of the Times, 4, 11, 162, 163.**

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IN one of the views which the Scripture gives of the Church of Christ it is called “the house of God.” Said Paul to Timothy: “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1 Timothy 3:14, 15. And again, in the letter to the Hebrews, we read: “And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; *whose house are we*, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Hebrews 3:5, 6. Peter also adopts the same figure, and, speaking of the Lord, says, “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.” 1 Peter 5:4, 5. [sic.] {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 162.1}

Christ is the “living Stone,” and they who believe on him become “lively” stones because they live by him who is life; for it is written: “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, previous; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.” These persons therefore who by believing on the living Stone become lively, or living, stones, are built up a spiritual house, and this house is the church of the living God. Paul further speaks of it as God’s *building*. Speaking of himself and Apollos as ministers by whom the brethren had believed on Christ, he says: “For we are laborers together with God: *ye* are god’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9. That is to say, By their labors in preaching the gospel of Christ, these brethren had been brought to believe on Christ, the living Stone, and, by believing on him, had become imbued with life from him, and had thus become in the figure living stones. These then built up that spiritual house, became God’s building. Now Paul carries the thought further: “According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:10, 11. {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 162.2}

Christ is the foundation and chief cornerstone, the very foundation of the foundation, and in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul carries the thought yet further and completes this conception of the church as the house or building of God. Of Christ he says: “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Ephesians 2:18-22. {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 162.3}

Here, then, is the Lord’s view of the church as the house or building of God: Christ, and the apostles and prophets are the foundation, and the membership at large is the superstructure. But Christ himself is the chief cornerstone, the foundation of the whole structure, the foundation of the foundation itself. Because it is only in Christ that either the apostles or prophets were ever what they were, or that any member is what he is. Christ is the living Stone, to whom the apostles and prophets and all others must come that they might be made lively stones, fit for the building of God. In Jesus Christ, and upon Jesus Christ, the church of Christ, the church of the living God, is built. And the purpose of this building is “for an habitation [a dwelling place] of God through the Spirit.” “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you,” and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Romans 8:9. And said Jesus, “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John 14:23. Thus it is, and of these “God hath said, I will dwell in them; and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” 2 Corinthians 6:16. As he saith also in another place, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 1 Corinthians 3:16. “For ye are the temple of the living God.” When these in whom the Spirit of God dwells are “fitly framed together,” and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and Jesus Christ, they grow unto an holy temple, in the Lord, and are “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” And that is the house of God, the church of the living God. {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 162.4}

Peter said, as before quoted, “To whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.” Now it is a characteristic of a living stone that it can be polished to such a height that it will reflect the image of the one looking upon it. Thus Christ is the living stone, to whom we come, and upon whom we look, and to whom we come, and upon whom we look, and as we look we see ourselves. And there “we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, *are changed into the same image* from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. And thus, being changed into the same image, we also become lively stones, reflecting in turn the image of Christ as he looks upon us; for then God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 4:6. Then the church is indeed the light of the world, a city set on a hill which cannot be hid. It is written of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, that it has twelve foundations “garnished with all manner of precious stones.” The first foundation is jasper, clear as crystal; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, a sardonyx; the sixth, a sardius; the seventh, a chrysolite; the eighth, a beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst; and are surmounted by a wall great and high, “and the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.” And the glory of God does lighten the city, and the Lamb is the light thereof; and her light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Revelation 21:10-23. Eye has never seen except in holy vision such a scene of glory and beauty as is here pictured of the city of the living God, and the home of the redeemed. {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 162.5}

Now the new Jerusalem is not the church. It is *not* the house, the building, the habitation, the church, of God, referred to in the texts which we have quoted in this article. But from this description of the glorious city of God, we may gather from this image of the church as a house, a building, and an habitation of God, an idea of what the Lord desires that the glorious church of God shall be. Christ is a living stone, the chief cornerstone, most precious. He is the first, the chief foundation of the church. Upon him as part of the foundation also, rest the apostles and prophets, made from him lively stones. Then upon this foundation are built all the saints, as gold, silver, and precious stones. 1 Corinthians 3:12. Then the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, shining through and reflected from all these, makes the church indeed the light of the world, giving to men the knowledge of the glory of God as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Oh, that each one who professes to be a member of the church of Christ were really so! Oh, that everyone who is professedly joined to the church, were really joined to Christ! that each one were indeed a lively stone reflecting the precious image of the dear Redeemer, and thus conveying to them that are in darkness the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it is manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord. Then indeed would the world believe that God did send Jesus Christ. {BEST June 3, 1889, p. 163.1}